

Business Gateway Initiative

Advisory Group Meeting

JUNE 1, 2005

Meeting Facilitators:

- Justin Van Epps SBA
- Kim McGoff BG Strategy Team
- Charles Colby Rockbridge Associates

Knowledge Agent:

- Jiyoung Chung BG PMO

Meeting Participants:

Lisa Westerback, DOC
Neil Sattler, DoEd
Bill Burdett, DOJ
Barbara Bingham, DOL
Cesar DeGuzman, DOL
Mary Ziegler, DOL
Steven Lott, DOT
Carolyn Scully, EPA
Susan Auby, EPA
Bruce Borzino, GSA
Keith Thurston, GSA
Nate Zuckerberg, GSA
Phyllis Gattos, IRS
Timothy Wang, OMB
Jennifer Foley, SBA
Carole Campbell, SSA
Gladys Myatt, Treasury
Chris Neidermayer, USDA
Adjoa Cathcart, BG PMO, SBA
Mardel Hall, BG PMO, SBA
Justin Van Epps, BG PMO, SBA
Jiyoung Chung, BG PMO
Franklyn Matthews, BG PMO
Cameron Hogan, BG PMO
Kim McGoff, BG Strategy
Marisol Rodriguez, BG Strategy

Dial-in Participants:

Drondraire Miller, DHS
Tracy Back, EPA
Toby Henderson, DOE
Kelly Wong, HUD

Meeting Location and Time:

2nd Floor, Eisenhower Conference room, Side A, 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Purpose:

- Report back on stakeholder feedback collected over the past several weeks
- Refine and achieve consensus on Business Gateway's scope and priorities
- Provide clarity regarding next steps on FY07 funding model

Expected Outcomes:

- Consensus on Business Gateway's value proposition
- Shared understanding of and consensus on refined project scope and priorities
- Refinement of and consensus on Business Gateway's value proposition

Meeting Agenda:

- Welcome and introduction
- Partner agency interview findings
- CIO Council feedback on eGov
- Focus group findings
- Value proposition & project scope
- Q&A/ discussion
- Wrap up / Next steps

Meeting Summary

Justin Van Epps provided an introduction and reviewed the meeting agenda. The BG PMO collected feedback from stakeholders over the last several weeks. The feedback confirms what BG is already doing and has helped BG prioritize the work in queue moving forward. Feedback from the different stakeholder groups were presented, followed by a discussion of the refined value proposition and project scope the stakeholder feedback helped shape.

Agencies were pleased that BG identified customer needs and is now laying out steps to address the problem. Agencies expressed support for the refined scope and had only a few questions/concerns about BG's strategic direction: whether forms processing and citizen-focused functionality were entirely in or out of scope and whether BG would require systems to be shut down. Notes from the meeting and discussion around these concerns are below.

Partner Agency Interview Findings

The Business Gateway PMO and Strategy team would like to thank partner agencies for participating in interviews to discuss expectations for the Gateway and for its strategic direction. These interviews were very insightful, and there was a consistent message across agencies that BG must refine its scope and audience and focus on compliance issues. These and the other, most salient issues are listed below under "Top Priorities," followed by additional priorities agencies identified.

Top Priorities

- Redefinition of the scope, value and audience of the Business Gateway is needed
- Business Gateway needs to shift the "forms paradigm" to electronic information submission
- Need to focus on compliance issues for businesses
- An understanding needs to be reached that no systems will be "turned off" because of Business Gateway

To clarify the final bullet in the above top priorities, the PMO/ Strategy team would like to emphasize that BG is an outward-facing initiative; while other eGov is to reduce redundant systems, the main focus here is to increase service to the public.

Secondary Priorities:

- Businesses should be able to fill out information only once. That information should be stored for future updates.
- There is a need to figure out how Business Gateway can help business do business with government. Some agencies expressed concern that they do not have regulatory over businesses and so do not deal with business compliance issues. Some agencies do contract with businesses to do business, and there exists no specific tool to help with this other than links to FedBizOpps or other links.

Less Pressing Priorities

- Agencies have their mission specific forms processing systems, Business Gateway should not try to duplicate these processes
- There should be little emphasis placed on helping large corporations because these organizations have specialists that have one-on-one relationships with agencies.
- Business Gateway should not be directed to citizens; it should focus on businesses.

CIO Council Feedback on eGov Initiatives

The CIO Council provided feedback during its recent offsite meeting that was helpful guidance for Business Gateway as it refines its project strategy and scope. Recommendations made are outlined below, which BG will incorporate moving forward:

- Desire to shift paradigm being “taxed” to “buying” a product (which requires each initiative to have a clear value proposition).
- Related to the first point, the CIO Council desires to see increased rigor in functional requirements so that the initiatives do not drive toward solutions without first clearly identifying and articulating the problems they are trying to address. In addition to increased rigor in defining needs, the Council recommends greater visibility into the defining of scope, budget, schedule, and Service Level Agreements (SLAs); and accountability for performance.
- Consider integration cross eGov initiatives where there are logical connections.
- Require market/communications campaign to brand these new products and services.

Business Focus Group and Trade Association Interview Findings

Rockbridge Associates conducted seven focus groups in four cities, segmented by size, sector and profession to ensure broad coverage, and interviews with 11 associations representing different industries, professions, and special business communities. The research shed light on what segments of the business community Business Gateway should target, and what content and functionality it should prioritize based on those segments’ needs. Research findings are summarized below.

Who is Business Gateway’s Audience? There are major differences in the relationship with government across organizations, based on the kind of user. The challenge for BG will be to package information differently to meet the needs of these different groups.

The following groups have the **greatest need** for Business Gateway:

- **Entrepreneurs and owners of new businesses**—this group has few resources to attend to various compliance issues
- **Owners of established/mature small businesses**
- **Generalist managers in mid-sized or large companies** with a wide range of government-facing responsibilities (e.g., HR generalist, CFO)
- **Non-profits**—There is clearly a need for a portal to help non-profits with regulations and compliance that are common across businesses and non-profit organizations. Supporting this point, DOL highlighted that it does not distinguish between businesses and non-profits: “an employer is an employer.”

The following group is a **lesser priority** for Business Gateway:

- **Specialists in large companies**—These individuals have established relationships with agencies and might best be served by dedicated initiatives within the agencies they work with (e.g., patent office, SEC, IRS).

What Businesses Want from Business Gateway. Focus group participants identified the issues below as top expectations from Business Gateway:

- **Personal contact.** Businesses hope Business Gateway can help them locate and interact more effectively with the right government employees for compliance issues.
- **Plain language compliance assistance.** A major concern of businesses and expectation of Business Gateway is help with compliance, in “plain language,” and on issues relevant to them that they are unaware of
- **Issue-based searches.** Businesses see a lot of value in an integrated portal that helps them search and locate government information around problems and issues they face (rather than around agencies and regulations)
- **Searchable, fill-able, file-able forms.** Another key expectation is the ability to electronically find, fill, and file for all levels of government—federal, state, and local.

This research is qualitative in nature and has certain limitations; results are not statistically projectable to the larger population. This research phase is instrumental in identifying the key issues for Business Gateway, and will inform future quantitative research, from which conclusions of a more projectable nature can be drawn.

Project Scope

Justin presented a refinement of the Business Gateway’s vision since the initiative’s inception: Given that the focus groups clearly revealed that BG is not just for small businesses, but businesses of all sizes, BG recommends removing “small” from the vision statement. The new vision statement is also explicit that BG is not focusing on serving individual citizens, but the Nation’s businesses. The vision also uses “data” instead of “forms” to acknowledge agencies’ desire to shift the “forms paradigm.” Phrases in brackets throughout this section refer to issues/scope that may or may not remain part of BG’s vision, pending funding/decision.

A More Focused Vision

To reduce the burden on the Nation’s ~~small~~ businesses by simplifying and improving electronic access to federal government information, programs, and services, [and provide businesses ~~and citizens~~ with one-stop means to find, fill, sign, and submit ~~forms~~ **data** and transactions electronically.]

Comments on the refined vision include the following, which the BG PMO and partner agencies will consider and incorporate if deemed necessary:

- The word “compliance” should be woven in more explicitly given its importance
- “Access to federal government information”: wording is too broad and open-ended and seems less focused on compliance than the focus group findings suggest BG should be
- “Data” does not make sense; it read “forms” before, which makes more sense; maybe should read “forms for data”
- Last phrase should be simplified: “Locate and submit data and transactions electronically”

BG’s hope is to move away from an agency hierarchy mindset and address issues from the perspective of businesses’ functional problems/issues and focus on externally facing goals:

Outcome Oriented Strategic Goals

- Answer businesses’ questions with an on-line “issue-based” search and information organization capability.
- Provide information and resources about how to comply with the most burdensome rules and regulations (i.e. organized links to plain-language, regulations, forms, agency guidance).
- Provide contact information and frequently asked questions.
- [Provide “stream-lined” interface to submit information required for compliance.]
- Provide related information and resources that help business do business.

Partner agencies provided the following comments on the refined outcome-oriented goals, which have been addressed in the updated presentation (see attached):

- “Most frequently used” rather than “most burdensome” should be the criteria for top compliance issues BG prioritizes
- The issue in the third bullet is more complicated than it appears; ICGI/USA Services are already working on this. BG should integrate with work already being done so as not to reinvent the wheel. Also, modify goal to read “help individuals get to the right person/place.”
- Remove “required for compliance” from the fourth, bracketed bullet to clarify that compliance assistance is definitely in scope and that some forms are compliance-related, while others are not required
- The fourth bullet, suggesting brokering data collection, seems out of scope/misaligned with BG’s strategic goals and with what focus groups said was important. While the functionality may have been found helpful in the Coal Vertical, there is an issue of feasibility issue of streamlining data collection across government.

What’s in:

BG will focus on priorities based on validated business need to improve customer service as a federal government to businesses, including providing consolidated access to compliance assistance, forms, and other resources. BG will target a refined audience with a segmented approach: emerging and new small businesses; mature small and mid-size businesses; generalists within large companies; and non-profit organizations. Given this refined scope, certain issues and functionality no longer fall within scope or are pending decision/funding, as described below.

What’s pending decision/funding:

- Provide businesses with one-stop means to fill, sign, and submit data (forms) and transactions electronically
- Data harmonization around top compliance scenarios
- Backend forms processing

Forms processing—in or out? There exists confusion as to whether forms processing is already in the business case. The PMO clarified that what’s in scope is providing information and resources and how to comply and links to relevant forms; what’s pending decision is stream-lined data collection and processing of information, which includes forms processing.

What’s out:

- Non-business focused citizen functionality
- Specialists within large businesses/industries... they have personal relationships within Government agencies.
- Non-profit specific functionality... they will use Business Gateway for those functions they share with for-profit businesses.
- Agency’s contracting forecast: Making it easier to do business WITH the Federal Government. (BG will link to FedBizOpps)
- Data Harmonization around industry... data harmonization will be addressed around compliance scenarios.

Citizens forms—in or out? Confusion exists regarding whether forms.gov currently has forms for citizens and if so, whether they will be removed. GSA/PMO clarified that citizen forms would not be removed (because formw.gov is tying into the ICR process and other future goals) but that BG’s focus will revolve around updating/upgrading forms for businesses, not citizens.

Business Gateway's Value Proposition

Value Proposition for Businesses. Agency partners agreed that while BG does not need to be the premier source for all business-related information, BG must provide unique value, which lies in reducing the time it takes businesses the answers they need from the government, providing compliance assistance, and helping businesses locate and submit forms.

Value Proposition for Agencies. The PMO presented a list of benefits BG provides agencies (see the attached presentation, slide 16); not all these will apply to all agencies, given that agencies have their own mission, structure, strategic priorities, and operational challenges. The many benefits for agencies include but are not limited to the following:

- Another communication channel to help provide businesses with agency-specific information and help improve agencies' customer service
- Increasing the number of businesses compliant with agency regulations
- Solution to implement the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, Government Paperwork Elimination Act of 1998, E-Government Act of 2002 and the Small Business Paperwork Relief Act of 2002

Alignment and implementation—will BG shut agency systems down? Relating to the final bullet above is the question of whether OMB expects agencies to shut down or replace agency systems. The PMO and OMB clarified that BG's goals are externally focused on improving customer service rather than on improving internal government operations. BG does not required agencies to shut down their web sites, for example. BG will work with agencies to evaluate whether overlap exists between agency tools and systems so BG and other agencies can leverage that technology rather than "reinvent the wheel" or create redundant systems. Some systems may be shut down if true redundancies exist. The ultimate goal would be for all agencies to share one or a few business-facing compliance assistance tools, for example. Partner agencies request that BG clearly articulate this point to the Governance Board and to ensure this stance is acceptable to OMB.

One agency expressed concern that the value proposition to agencies did not resonate; the BG Strategy Team would like any partner agency sharing this sentiment to reflect on what value would resonate and share this with the Strategy Team and Advisory Group.

Staged Delivery of Business Gateway Enhancements

Business Gateway plans to implement enhancements according to the following time-frame:

1. FY02-FY04: Established a consolidated access point to Government resources that makes it easier for businesses to find benefits, information (business.gov) and forms (forms.gov) from across all Federal agencies.
2. FY05: Upgrade business.gov to reflect targeted business segments, integrate with other applicable eGov initiatives and quick hit requirements (business size, industry, function, etc).
3. FY05: Provide contact information and answers to frequently asked questions.
4. FY05-FY06: Develop issue-based search capability to target information that is of interest to specific business inquiry.
5. FY05-FY06: Provide compliance assistance resources (including plain language, rules and regs, forms) that addresses what "a business needs to do" to respond to the top compliance requirements.
6. [FY05-FY07: Create business information exchange standards and collection interface (including data and interface definitions, privacy policy, and other applicable legal and system of record issues) to reduce the difficulty, redundancy and expense of compliance for business.]
7. FY06 & beyond: Integrate Federal, State and local government information/resources.

Next Steps

Information submission work group meetings. The question remains as to whether information submission should be part of BG's goals, and if so, what technology solution BG should implement to enable this functionality. To address these questions, BG will convene a series of work group sessions to define functional requirements and identify selection criteria for one of three possible solutions:

- Centralized forms processing (LMI AoA)
- Business Information Exchange Standards
- Streamline compliance forms links

In August and September, BG will identify the scope, cost, schedule, etc., to put information submission back in OMB 300, if the Advisory Group and Governance Board decide to proceed.

Sustained funding work group meetings. A series of meetings will be held to review and validate BG's current allocation model and examine alternative funding models.

Cost-benefit analysis guidance. BG will work with OMB to modify questions agencies must respond to regarding cost savings to provide a meaningful baseline for future measurement of BG impact on businesses and agencies.

Action Items/Next Steps:

Action Item List			
#	Description	Owner	Due Date
1	Modify presentation to reflect agencies' comments and edits	BG Strategy Team	COMPLETED
2	Participate in funding allocation meetings and forms processing strategy meetings	Partner agencies	Starting week of 6/13/05
3	Reflect on BG's value proposition to agencies, and if no statements resonate, send statements that would resonate to Marisol.rodriquez@touchstone.com	Partner agencies	6/13/05
4	Clarify alignment/ implementation expectations to Governance Board and with OMB	PMO	6/14/05
5	Brief CIO in preparation for June 14 th Governance Board meeting	Partner agencies	6/14/05